

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Canceled)
2. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 21, wherein the sleeve is a cylindrical sleeve having a predetermined length and a predetermined diameter.
3. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 21, wherein a cross-section of the opening is circular.
4. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 21, wherein the first surface is an inner surface.
5. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 4, wherein the sleeve further includes a second surface concentric with the first surface.
6. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 5, wherein the second surface is an outer surface.
7. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 21, wherein the sleeve includes one of solid rubber and cellular rubber.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 7, wherein the cellular rubber

includes closed cell rubber.

10. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 7, wherein the cellular rubber includes open cell rubber.

11. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 10, wherein the open cell rubber includes foam.

12. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 21, wherein the sleeve further includes a slit that extends from the first surface to a second surface of the sleeve.

13. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 12, wherein the slit extends from the first end of the sleeve to the second end of the sleeve.

14. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 21, wherein the sleeve further includes a fabric layer connected to a second surface of the sleeve.

15. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 14, wherein the fabric layer is waterproof.

16. (Previously Amended) The ladder of claim 14, wherein the sleeve further includes a fastener connected to the fabric layer.

17. (Currently Amended) A ladder, comprising:  
a first side rail;  
a second side rail opposite the first side rail;  
a rung connected to the first and second side rails; and  
a sleeve that covers a substantial portion of the rung between the first and second side rails, wherein the sleeve includes a grooved surface in contact with the rung.

18. (Original) The ladder of claim 17, wherein the sleeve is removable.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A ladder, comprising:

a first side rail;

a second side rail opposite the first side rail;

a rung connected to the first and second side rails; and

means for covering a substantial portion of the rung between the first and second side rails, including a plurality of grooves in contact with said rung.

21. (Previously Presented) The ladder of claim 17, wherein the sleeve includes:

a first end;

a second end opposite the first end; and

a first surface in contact with the rung, wherein the first surface defines an opening extending from the first end to the second end.